

**North American Waterfowl Management Plan Evaluation Team (CET)
Minutes of the August 19-20, 1997 Meeting at Oak Hammock, Manitoba**

The meeting was called to order at 9 am on August 19 at facilities provided by Ducks Unlimited Canada at Oak Hammock Marsh. All members (Mike Anderson, Bob Bailey, Rick Baydack, Fred Johnson, Mark Koneff, Jeff Nelson, Jim Ringelman, and Clayton Rubec) were present, except Tom Martin who had recently resigned from the CET do to overwhelming commitments. Also in attendance were Ken Williams and David Smith of the North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office, and Doug Johnson of the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center.

Review of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and several items were added: a) update on policy assessment developments from Canada, and b) the autumn report to the Plan Committee.

Events Since the January Meeting

Mark Koneff reviewed developments since the previous CET meeting in January. During the past 8 months there has been a continual increase in interest and commitment to monitoring and assessment needs in U.S. Joint Ventures which can be attributable to the maturation of Joint Ventures, an increased commitment to these issues by the North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office (NAWWO), and the availability of seed funding. In effort to capitalize on this growing interest, the NAWWO, at the June 1997 meeting of U.S. Joint Venture Coordinators, proposed a model delivery process for the Plan founded on a continual cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation functions. Development needs and responsibilities of the CET, Joint Ventures, and the NAWWO were discussed. U.S. Joint Venture Coordinators subsequently requested that NAWWO prepare a more detailed plan describing these needs, roles, and responsibilities. A draft plan was completed and was forwarded to U.S. Joint Venture Coordinators and the CET. The draft proposed new committee structures and lines of communication between Joint Ventures and the CET, a new CET structure, and new mechanisms for funding monitoring and assessment programs in U.S. Joint Ventures. That draft formed the basis for much of the discussion in Oak Hammock. The same general delivery model was proposed to the Plan Committee in their August 1997 meeting, and was endorsed as a useful conceptualization of the value of integrated planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Update on Plan Committee Meeting

Ken Williams, U.S. Co-Chair of the Plan Committee, provided a update on the Plan Committee meeting in August which had set the direction for the 1998 Update. He discussed the results of Phase II of the consultation process. He summarized Plan Committee decisions regarding the framework elements for the 1998 Update: waterfowl focus and implications for biological foundation and evaluation programs, flexibility in delivery at all levels, importance of policy instruments, communication of broad biodiversity benefits. Other issues discussed by the Plan Committee and summarized by Ken were the role and membership of the Plan Committee,

Plan objectives, joint venture boundaries, and creation of a Steering Committee to oversee the drafting process.

Discussion of the NAWWO Proposal

It was observed that there were three fundamental changes in the NAWWO proposal with respect to the status quo conditions. There were: 1) funding available in U.S., 2) dedicated staff resources available in the U.S. through at least the NAWWO and the Migratory Bird Management Office (MBMO), and 3) formal mechanisms for liaison with U.S. Joint Ventures. The NAWWO proposal suggested that, in order to take better advantage of funding which is or may be available through the NAWCA, evaluation funding processes may need to be different in the Mexico, Canada, to better accommodate differences in the administration of Act funds in the three countries. Concern was expressed by several members that movement toward these Nationally-centered processes would be undesirable since they could reduce important cross border communication. NAWWO suggested that the proposed National-focus pertained primarily to structures and processes designed to fund joint venture level assessment projects and that significant cross-border coordination would be maintained through the CET and at the Joint Venture Technical Group level.

After much discussion the proposal forwarded by NAWWO was generally endorsed with one addition. The CET felt it was important that the reorganized future CET be provided with guidance to assist them in setting priorities and to insulate them from inevitable conflicting pressures for their time and resources. Preferably this steering function would come from Plan Committee which has been reorganized to include representation which would legitimately provide such guidance. Otherwise, an international Evaluation Steering Committee could be formed to provide this oversight to the reorganized CET.

Discussion on Policy

The CET discussed the importance of a more proactive and systematic approach to policy analysis for the Plan. All were in agreement that land policy issues were central and vital to ultimate achievement of Plan objectives. It was generally agreed, however, that most policy issues are more effectively pursued at the National, regional, or even local level. The NAWWO was not in favor of using the CET as a venue for policy assessment in the United States, but would rather the CET focus on biological issues. The NAWWO recognized the importance of policy impacts, but suggested that forums other than the CET would be more effective for policy analysis. It will be up to Canada and Mexico to determine both the composition and focus of their National representatives to the CET.

Action Items

- 1) Jeff Nelson will develop a short summary of the CET's decisions regarding the NAWWO proposal and will forward it to the CET for comment by 8/25. The CET will send comment to Jeff by 8/29. The final letter will be transmitted to the U.S. and Canadian

Co-Chairs by 9/1.

- 2) Fred Johnson/Doug Johnson will develop more detailed documentation and CET proposals to the Plan Committee on the population objectives of the 1998 Update. Fred will describe problems associated with existing population goals, particularly confusion stemming from the inclusion “unsurveyed area” estimates and from changes in estimation procedures by MBMO. Doug will explore the development of functional objectives which account for the uncontrollable effects of prairie water conditions on continental waterfowl populations. Doug and Fred will submit their ideas to the CET by 9/20 and the CET will have a chance to comment until the 9/30. The CET suggestions will then be forwarded to the Plan Committee Co-Chairs by 10/3.
- 3) Mark Koneff will coordinate the development of the 1997 annual report of the CET to the Plan Committee. The report will consist of two main sections: evaluation progress over the past year, and presentation and justification for the new evaluation structures and processes. In preparing the first section, Mark will solicit progress reports from individuals involved in mallard survival and recruitment modeling for the Plan, and will review and summarize evaluation reports received from joint ventures. He will also describe recent progress in dedicating full time staff resources to evaluation coordination at the joint venture level (i.e., Central Valley, Gulf Coast).

In the second section, Mark will describe how the new evaluation structures and processes will facilitate the integration of planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. Bob Bailey will provide Canadian perspective in the drafting of this section, as well as on other issues such as policy analysis. First draft transmitted to the CET on 10/24. The CET will provide comments back by 11/7. The final report will be transmitted to the Plan Committee Co-Chairs on 11/15.